

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3471

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 559

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, CH

SUBJECT: ARCHEOLOGICAL SHOW: KANSAS CITY SHOWING

REF: STATE 68465

1. USLO APPRECIATES DETAILED REPORT (REFTEL) ON ASPECTS OF NELSON GALLERY COLLECTION WHICH MIGHT BE OFFENSIVE TO PRC AND WE AGREE THAT, ON THE SURFACE, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE REASON FOR CHINESE TO SINGLE OUT NELSON COLLECTION FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT. WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENT'S BACKGROUND SHOULD CHINESE PRESS FURTHER ON CLOSURE OF THE GALLERY'S PERMANENT COLLECTION.

2. LAST YEAR A USLO WIFE ACCOMPANIED BY A VISITING CHINA SCHOLAR VISITED THE LUNG MEN CAVES, AND AT VACANT SPOT WHERE PIN-YANG RELIEF ONCE LOCATED FOUND A SIGN SAYING "STOLEN BY U.S. IMPERIALISTS". VISITING CHINA SCHOLAR TOOK ISSUE WITH SIGN AND ARGUED RATHER HEATEDLY WITH GUIDE THAT RELIEF WAS PURCHASED, NOTSTOLEN, AND THAT THIS PRACTICE WAS COMMON IN MANY COUNTRIES INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES. OFFENSIVE SIGN WAS REMOVED ON THE SPOT AND CHINESE HAVE AVOIDED THE SUBJECT WITH SUBSEQUENT AMERICAN VISITORS. QUITE CLEARLY, THIS PARTICULAR OBJET D'ART IS A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE SENSITIVITY FOR THE CHINESE.
BUSH

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